

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 13539 020821Z

11
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /009 W
----- 078693
P 011759Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8045

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AF/EX FOR KRYZA

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP, PFOR, PINS, ASUP, NI, US
SUBJ: WACASC

REF : (A) STATE 289792; (B) STATE 284085; (C) LAGOS 13062;
(D) LAGOS 12947.

1. AMBASSADOR, DCM AND WACASC DIRECTOR WALLACE MET WITH MEA PROTOCOL CHIEF BALEWA AND PROTOCOL OFFICER POPOOLA MORNING DECEMBER 1 TO DISCUSS WACASC QUESTION. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN AT IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED LIMITATION OF WACASC TO NIGERIA, CHAD AND NIGER (NCN), VOICED SURPRISE THAT A PROPOSAL OF THIS GRAVITY WOULD BE ADVANCED WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF EXTAFF COMMISSIONER, AND SAID HE WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IT WITH BALEWA.

2. BALEWA RESPONDED THAT DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN BY "THE GOVERNMENT" PURELY IN INTEREST OF DECONGESTION OF APAPA PORT. MEA HAD HAD NO ROLE IN DECISION AND WAS SIMPLY CHARGED WITH INFORMING EMBASSY AND DISCUSSING MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION. BALEWA TERMED DECISION " PURELY ADMINISTRATIVE" AND MADE CLEAR IT WAS NOT INTENDED TO CUT OFF WACASC OPERATION ABRUPTLY. HE IMPLIED IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE PHASE WACASC OPERATION DOWN TO NCN RESIDUAL AS PIPELINE IS EMPTIED.

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PAGE 02 LAGOS 13539 020821Z

3. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT WACASC COULD NOT BE MAINTAINED

IN NIGERIA JUST TO SERVE NCN, AND IF FMG INSISTS ON POSITION SET FORTH IN NOTE OF NOVEMBER 12 (REF. (D)), USG WOULD HAVE TO RELOCATE WACASC IN ANOTHER COUNTRY. AMBASSADOR SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO DISCUSS MODALITIES OF PHASE DOWN, BECAUSE WE CONSIDERED IT UNJUSTIFIED IN VIEW OF FACT THAT WACASC SHIPMENTS REPRESENTED ONLY 1/20TH OF 1PC OF TOTAL TONNAGE HANDLED THROUGH APAPA. FURTHERMORE, HARDSHIP FOR 24 POSTS DURING TRANSITION WOULD BE EXTREME. AMBASSADOR SAID WHAT HE WAS REQUESTING WAS RECONSIDERATION OF BASIC FMG DECISION IN THE MATTER.

4. BALEWA SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO GO BACK TO "THE GOVERNMENT" FOR RECONSIDERATION, BUT IF EMBASSY MADE WRITTEN REQUEST, HE COULD PASS IT ON AND INFORM US OF THE REACTION. AMBASSADOR SAID WE WOULD WRITE NOTE PRESENTING FULL FACTS AND RATIONALE FOR RECONSIDERATION OF DECISION.

5. AMBASSADOR ASKED IF WACASC COULD IN THE MEANTIME CONTINUE NORMAL OPERATIONS. BALEWA SAID YES, IT COULD.

6. COMMENT: WE WILL PREPARE NOTE SOONEST AND WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT INFORMED.

7. IN VIEW BALEWA'S AGREEMENT THAT WACASC CAN CONTINUE NORMAL OPERATIONS FOR TIME BEING (AND IMPLICATION THAT PIPELINE CAN BE RUN OUT IF ULTIMATE DECISION IS NEGATIVE), WE DO NOT RPT NOT CONSIDER IT PRUDENT TO INFORM CLIENT POSTS OF CURRENT EXCHANGE (REF. (A)) AT THIS TIME.
EASUM

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